



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE ORTHODOX PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHINESE.

By GEORGE WILLIAM KNOX,  
Union Theological Seminary.

THE orthodox philosophy of the Chinese received final form in the twelfth century of our era, and still holds its place, notwithstanding much adverse criticism from opposing schools. It has the sanction of the government, it determines the meaning of the sacred books, and its followers constitute the "sect of the learned." Until the recent introduction of modern science into Japan, there also it was taught in the great schools, other doctrine being forbidden.<sup>1</sup>

Its followers identify it, not only with the system of doctrine taught by the sages, but with the absolute truth. As an eloquent writer puts it: "For thirty years I have read and pondered it. Looking at its heights, how transcendent! Seeking to divide it, how compact! Yet is it neither too far away and high, nor too shallow and near at hand! Should Sages again appear, they would follow it! For the Way of Heaven and Earth is the Way of the Sage Kings!<sup>2</sup> The Way of the Sage Kings is the Way of Confucius and Mencius! The Way of Confucius and Mencius is the Way of Cheng and Chu! For-saking Cheng and Chu, we cannot find Confucius and Mencius," nor ultimately the way of heaven and earth. Now Cheng and Chu were philosophers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Christian era.

Confucius left nothing of philosophical importance in writing.

<sup>1</sup> My authorities for this sketch are the writings of Chu Hi, with the works of his Japanese representatives. Certain writings of some of the latter I translated and published in the *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. XX, where references in detail may be found. I have used my translations freely in this paper. I may add that my views expressed in the introduction have changed chiefly as to the meaning of the word *Khi*, and, as to that, only in part.

<sup>2</sup>The Sage Kings are the mythical monarchs Yao and Shun; they began to reign B. C. 2357, and reigned one hundred years, and were succeeded by Shun, who reigned fifty years. But Chinese history begins in the twelfth century B. C.

His teachings were collected by his disciples, amplified by his grandson, expanded in the doctrine of the Mean, defended and enriched by Mencius and other scholars. Thus handed down, his words have exerted an unparalleled influence. None else has dominated so vast a portion of mankind in so many ways. To the entire far East he has been, not only the ideal man and the sage whose teaching reveals the ultimate principles of the universe, but the final authority in etiquette, morals, courts of law, and affairs of state. Wide as is the gap everywhere between precept and practice, in China there is no avowed double standard for public and private affairs, nor for the secular and the religious life. The great teachers of morals have been publicists, and often great leaders in affairs of state.

Nevertheless, we misunderstand the situation, if we seek to know the intellectual and religious life of the Chinese by a study of Confucius, supplemented by the classics and Mencius. As well might we seek to understand the Middle Ages by a study of the gospels, supplemented by the rest of the bible. For, as European theology took into itself many and diverse elements, so did the Chinese philosophy. This is too often overlooked, and students discuss the belief of educated Chinamen, as if it could be deduced from the words of the sage, which is like deducing the theology of Thomas Aquinas from the sayings of Jesus.

Laotze was contemporaneous with Confucius, and his mysticism exerted great influence on Chinese thought. Later, various heretical schools threatened the supremacy of the master, and Mencius set himself to repel their attacks. But more important than all, in the first century Buddhism obtained imperial recognition, and for a thousand years held sway, its philosophy being characteristic and controlling. During this long period the Confucian ethics were accepted indeed, but men found it possible to be zealous at the same time for Buddha, the teachings of the Great Vehicle supplying answers to the deep questions of life and being. Only at last, in the eleventh century, was a philosophy organized, which professed to cast aside Buddhism, and to be at once the pure teachings of the classics and the final

truth of the universe. I need not add that the various systems thus prominent for so long a time were not without a determining influence on the minds of the great scholars who professed to reject them.

The philosophers of the Sung dynasty<sup>3</sup> had been trained in Buddhism. Their revolt was the more bitter. To them Buddhism was false in philosophy, and the foe of morals. Says a Japanese writer: "Buddha himself never got beyond the outside of things. His purpose was good; but he was ignorant of the essential principles. After his death, even the semblance of truth disappeared, so that his system dissuaded from evil, and incited to evil. It is to be classed with Taoism, as a thorn in the way, an obstacle to the gate of truth. It is to be avoided as one would flee an evil voice and the temptations of lust. For man's whole duty is to live as befits his station; but the Buddhist leaves it, and becomes a priest. Such practice comes from the false doctrine of three worlds (transmigration). Buddha left his throne, and became a hermit, because he did not know the truth. It was the act of a madman. What virtue is there in a hermit's rags, or what contamination in kingly robes? Each must stand in his own place. To think that virtue and vice inhere in certain stations, or in certain forms, is the error of the vicious and of the heretic. Men forsake parents and lords that they may become priests and save themselves! Buddhism teaches that this world is transient, brief, borrowed, and therefore that its duties may be renounced for the sake of salvation in the world to come! That is a shameful exhibition of a selfish craving for happiness! True virtue forsakes self, and then there is no need to flee the world. It is not wonderful that other evils are associated with such teaching; that worship is substituted for righteousness and prayers for truth; that priests become debauched and their asceticism only a cloak for the vilest impurity; and that the popular Buddhist literature compares with the purity of the classics as charcoal with new-fallen snow."

<sup>3</sup>The Sung dynasty (including the southern Sung) ruled China from 970-1277 A. D.

Buddhism is to be denounced, therefore, in the name of the Confucian ethics which exalt the actual human relations and sanctify home, family, and native land. Heaven, *i. e.*, nature, has ordained that men live in families, and in the state the relations of son and father, lord and subject, brother and brother, friend and friend, husband and wife, are sacred. He who violates them is a criminal and a castaway.

The principle on which Buddhism builds is the impermanence of all things. "All pass away, nothing remains. The world is like the clouds which form and disappear; it is a vision, a dream unreal through and through. So taught this superficial thinker who dwelt among barbarians in a time of darkness. He saw only the outside of things."

Here, then, at once is the problem: In a world of change, is there anything which changes not; in a world of impermanence, is there reality; in the midst of that which passes away, can there be an immovable basis for morality? This is the crux; for, if all changes, morality too must change, and with the passing world the truth of the sage must pass. The ethical interest predominates, and ontology has value only as its support.

Manifestly the world seems wholly to pass away; and as we describe its phenomena we may say: It is composed of a single element called *Khi*,<sup>4</sup> which exists forever, and of which are all things. In the beginning it rested to the utmost limit, and then moved to the farthest limit, and then rested, and then moved, its rest begetting *Yin*, and its motion begetting *Yang*.<sup>5</sup> Yin is the west, the female, the earth; it is dark, passive, selfish, avaricious, and the way of all evil men belongs to it. Yang is the east, heaven, the male; it is light, active, pure, unselfish, and the way of all superior men belongs to it. There never was a time when these opposites were not, and through them the cosmic processes

<sup>4</sup>*Khi* is "the breath," and it has most of the connotations of *ruach* and *spiritus*. Its philosophical use is best represented by the stoic *pneuma*. It is the element of change.

<sup>5</sup>Yin and Yang are translated usually female and male; but negative and positive represent the meaning better. There is no thought of sex, it being one manifestation only of the two powers.

are condensation and dispersion. The two powers, meeting each other, produce the five elements, earth, air, fire, water, metal, and from these come the myriad of things. "The Yin and Yang entangling each other, attracting, repelling each other, coming and going to and fro, rising up and falling down ever since the beginning of the world, naturally there are produced flat and plain spots, and rugged and inclined spots, and good and bad portions of Khi. The different portions of Khi are bright and dark, clear and turbid, pure and impure, free and obstructed, strong and weak, fine and coarse, good and bad, clever and foolish, thick and thin, deep and shallow, direct and oblique, resisting and yielding, quick and slow, etc." Or, as a late writer puts it: "The universe is one Khi. Divided, it is the Yin and Yang, the five elements, heaven, earth, and all things—sun, moon, hills, streams, seas, birds, men, brutes, grasses, trees, insects, fishes. Though these all differ, yet are they of the one Khi. Its ethereal, pure part revolving above, is called heaven; its heavy, impure part, stationary below, is called earth. Of the Yang and lighting the day, it is called the sun; of the Yin and lighting the night, it is called the moon; endowed with the five elements, and resembling heaven and earth, it is called man; flying through the air, it is called bird; creeping on the earth, it is called beast; and in each kind there are divisions innumerable. But all are manifestations of the one Khi. Condensed, it forms all objects having shape; dissolved, it is like the air, and there is no space without it, condensation and dissolution being alike constant and incomprehensible. In all the universe, rain and sunshine, bloom and decay, birth and death, the past and present of heaven and earth, the changes of sea and land, are solely because of the ceaseless changes of the Khi. It is coarse and fine. The coarse is readily perceived and acknowledged; the fine not so easily, but equally with the objects of form are gods, mind, soul, knowledge of the Khi, all wonderful and indefinable. So, too, are all activities of mind and matter of the Khi—motion, growth, perfume, vision, hearing, laughter, crying, rest, these in all their kinds are manifestations of the activities of the Khi." Chu Hi says: "Khi

forms and makes, the Kosmos was formed by the action of the Yin and Yang. The opposites grinding together, as the grain is scattered from a mill, so do all things come, all that is worthy and noble, all that is unworthy and ignoble, heaven and earth, man's body, sun, stars, wind, thunder, lightning, man's soul and mind." There is no creator, but an endless process. Heaven itself shall pass away. Still heaven is not the blue vault merely; it is not a dead unfeeling thing. It has a nature that feels. It is instinct with life, and responds to man's deeds and emotions. The word is often used in the sense of providence. There is no distinction clearly made of spirit and matter; for the thought moves in quite a different sphere, yet does the spiritual predominate. For all nature is instinct with life and feeling, and part responds to part as soul to soul. It is not that a soul dwells within, but that all lives, and feels, and, according to its nature, responds. So all alike pass away; but the process itself is forever. From the undifferentiated Khi the Kosmos comes, and to the first condition it returns. Then, after rest to the uttermost, movement begins again, the homogeneous Khi begets the opposites, and the process goes on, worlds without end.

Thus all things seem to pass away and nothing abides, neither mind nor body, man nor gods, force nor form, rest nor motion, heaven nor earth. Is then Buddhism correct and is impermanence the ultimate fact?

Beyond all this, behind the furthest limit the mind can reach, behind all affirmation is Li. I quote detached sentences from Chu Hi in definition. By it all things exist. It is neither rest nor motion, but it has these, as it is their law. It is above all form and all activity. It can be described by no words which have to do with appearances, for it is before Khi itself and is the reason why Khi is Khi. Yet it never exists alone but is ever embodied in Khi. Without Khi is no Li as without Li is no Khi. Both are forever together yet is Li first, though in the eternal process both are without beginning and end. As Khi condenses, as it forms and makes, there is Li in its midst. Indeed we may call Li the substance of Khi, the reason why Khi is Khi.

Li is forever one, yet has everything its own, as the moon is reflected in the bosom of every pool. Nor can it be named, since all names belong to Khi, but using our best term, expressing the inexpressible, it is benevolence, the chief of all virtues. Li is then the essence of virtue, perfect benevolence, righteousness, and truth. If we describe the very beginning of all as the Great Ultimate, then before this we put another, the No-Ultimate.

Thus our chief question emerges: If the principle of the universe, the true nature of all things, even if Khi, be best named righteousness and truth, whence comes evil? From the changing Khi and of necessity. Khi cannot receive Li equally. Parts of it are perfectly recipient and there is the true manifestation of righteousness. Thus the example among men is the sage. His Khi nature, perfectly recipient of Li, expresses absolute righteousness and truth in every feeling, word, and act. But at the other extreme are men whose Khi nature obscures the Li. Passion, selfishness, and ignorance prevail and the Li, *i. e.*, righteousness and truth, vanish. So is it with the state, with society, with the family, and with all things. Sometimes the Khi nature embodies and reveals the Li in perfectness, but again only imperfectly, or even so far as manifestation goes, not at all. For Khi is active and Li becomes dependent upon it, and as time passes Khi condenses more and more until Li is wholly obscured. Then evil seems to triumph, the last stage is reached, and the world returns to chaos. Yet in all, Li remains untouched, uninjured, unmoved, eternally the same. Righteousness and truth are the true nature of man, and none the less because he does not recognize the fact. He identifies himself with Khi but that does not alter the real state of the case. Evil is superficial, and to find the truth we need only to clear away passion, which collects like vapor on a mirror. The metal beneath is still the same though it has ceased to reflect the light.

There is therefore in man and all things a two-fold nature. One is good, ideally, unchangeably good. It is the true nature, the true self, and all virtue consists in recognizing it and con-



forming feeling, word and act to it. The other is a composite nature, the Li as embodied in the Khi-nature. And this composite nature differs. In the sage it too is holy, the Khi being perfectly expressive of the Li. In the superior man it is progressively righteous, since he fights the good fight and wins righteousness: in the evil man the passions win, the Li is obscured and he does evil continually. Thus is explained the long debate touching the nature of man. Mencius declared it good, a teaching contradicted not only by the heretics but by the facts. But we can admit both his teachings and the facts. He spoke of the Li, of the true nature, and that is good. It was not fitting that he should condescend to speak of the Khi. The true nature of man, then, is good, but alas! how seldom is it manifested in life.

Li is a real existence, the most real of all existences. It is not mere thought, a deduction from the movements of Khi. Our thoughts are Khi, and Li cannot be dependent on us. Two points we must distinguish, Li's reality and priority, and its complete inactivity. The writers call it cause, and if their language is at times inconsistent, ascribing to Li what belongs to Khi, nevertheless the meaning is clear. The Chinese lack in definition, and final and efficient causes are confused. But to use our own interpretation, Li is the final cause, and Khi the efficient; Khi is everything except Li, yet Li is the most real of all existences, since the nearer we come to reality the more clearly we perceive the inherent teleology which is the great and final truth. This is order, for the order of the universe is the essence of its being and explains all. It is Li.

But though Li is thus the idea conceived ontologically, yet it is expressible, as we have seen, only in terms of ethics. It is most like that we call righteousness. Divided, it gives us the five virtues, and these find perfect expression in the five relationships. When embodied in the individual, we have the sage, and when embodied in the state, the perfect empire. This, too, historically, has been attained and is described in the sacred books. Then the sage was king, the superior man was his chief minister, all officials were wise and virtuous, and the

stupid majority were in their rightful place below. Naturally thus each man performed his duties and there was none evil, though many were unlearned. The king did not take the empire as his own. He was not covetous or self-indulgent. He recognized that the empire is the empire of the empire and not the empire of one man. His influence flowed through his immediate associates, and so to the remotest regions. There was need for neither soldier nor policeman, for the empire was peace. Thus once, the true empire found expression and the Khi perfectly revealed the Li.

But as time passed the Khi changed. There was no longer a sage upon the throne. The superior man went from place to place seeking employment. Favoritism prevailed and evil men ruled the state. The king took the empire as his toy and his evil influence reached all ranks. Fools were in command and the wise obeyed. The true order was subverted, the true empire disappeared, and unless there be reform anarchy ensues.

The family reveals the same truth. When its relations ordained by heaven are all observed there is perfect harmony and peace, but when selfishness and passion prevail duties are forgotten and the family is at last destroyed.

These are more than illustrations, they are the most vital instances of the ultimate truth. Man is the little heaven and earth. He combines all the elements of the *kosmos* and when we know him we know it. He is in immediate relation to every part. Heaven, for example, is explained by man. Its true nature is Li and this, expressed in the form of virtues, constitutes the "Way," the moral law. Its true nature therefore is one with man's, and its expression is his infallible rule of life. But this true nature is embodied in Khi; *i. e.*, the blue heaven above us which we see. But it, too, corresponds to man. As he feels it feels, as he knows it knows, for it is not a thing apart, but in the most intimate relationship. All move as one. So when man is at peace it is in rest, but when he sorrows it grieves. Man is central and heaven bears the relation to him of a father. When a son sins the father suffers also, and not in spirit only; his body weakens and by and by illness comes, and even death.

And so when man sins is it with heaven. The emperor is the representative of man and is called the son of heaven. When he sins heaven grieves and its body shows its sorrow, eclipses, portents, shooting stars, untimely heat and cold and on earth earthquakes, famines, plagues. These should lead to self-examination on the part of man and to reformation. For if neglected, going on from bad to worse, heaven and earth suffer more and more and disaster can be the only end. So when man obeys and fulfils his duty heaven approves and peace, prosperity and happiness ensue.

As Li is the divine order of the universe, and as it is embodied in state, family, and man, and as the king is the great representative of men, we can judge how evil Buddhism is and Buddha. He discerned only the outside of things, the Khi, and could see no essential principle, no Li. So he deserted his place and duty and sought to save himself. His followers teach that a man may desert his father, a wife her husband, and every one his place, and that this is duty! This is indeed to call good evil and evil good. In the name of wisdom it bids the king desert his throne and the child his parents. It declares that everything is bad and subverts family and state. Really nothing is bad if held in subordination to Li. Thus held, each thing is the divine instrument for the manifestation of righteousness. Cast these means away and there can be no virtue, for Li is always embodied in Khi. Let everything be in its order; let first be first and last be last; then all is good in self, in family, in state, and in the universe.

As Li is, but does not act, contemplation leads to truth. The sage is the heaven-endowed man who perceives truth without guide or study. His truth is written down for our instruction and constitutes the sacred books. The superior man studies these and comes at last to understand the truth. The dull man must be content simply to obey and thus practically to fulfil the duties of his station.

As Li is, but does not act, its perfect embodiment is in passivity. This is stronger than all activities. The sage king rules by doing naught. When the sage enrobed with folded arms is

in the place of power, the empire honors him as the sun and moon, imitates him as one imitates his parents, and communes with him more than with the formless divinities of heaven and earth. Wherever he goes there is reformation, as the water naturally shapes itself to the vessel. His thought is divine and works his will as readily as one may turn his hand. Such leadership can never be rivaled by knowledge, power, or gifts.

The method of study is first to learn the Li and then to seek its embodiment in things. First know, then act, for even virtue is valueless without knowledge. And of all knowledge the first is of self. Unless we know the truth within, we cannot know it anywhere. This true self which we must know is far below the changing self of thought and will and feeling. All these are unreal and belong to Khi. None endures. They slip away at last as the morning vapor is drawn up into the sun, as fire vanishes in fire, as the water is lost in the sea. No conscious self endures, but our true, enduring nature is our Li. It is the reality of the unmoved. So first of all we must get rid of lust and seek the self in repose. Without plans or thought, in empty quietness alone, and then from this right reason shall right movement come. Self, formless, voiceless, odorless, without thought or act, is the source of all.

That is, to interpret, man's place in society and family and universe is his real reason for existence. He is like the soldier who, *qua* soldier, finds his one reason for existence in his position in the ranks. Apart from this nothing matters, and for this are all the rest, food, exercise, clothing, sleep. Man must so control his Khi nature that he may see this truth, and seeing it may fulfil his duty. The whole truth then may be expressed by obedience, to the ideal nature if one be in superior station, to the actual superior if one be subordinate.

When man perceives all this and adjusts himself to the truth, he has attained. There is no more for him to learn or do. He needs no more. One with the eternal truth, how shall he forget it? How shall he fall into error? Lying down, getting up, moving, resting, in peace, in trouble, in death, in life, in joy, in

sorrow, all is well. Never for a moment will he leave this way. This it is to know the truth in ourselves.

With Li recognized as the order of the universe, the whole system becomes clear. Li in its essence is most like righteousness, benevolence, and truth, because it is they abstracted and reified. The virtues are precisely the relationships of the Confucian family and state, and the Li are they turned into real existences. Thus the developed system is true to type. Notwithstanding its indebtedness to alien and hostile teachings, it does as a matter of fact furnish the ontology needed for the dogmatic ethics of Confucius. For educated men this teaching, thus completed, put to final rout the pessimistic asceticism of Buddhism and satisfied well enough their intellectual needs. Entrenched in a technical barricade which could be carried only by years of strenuous endeavor, those who finally mastered it were content. The truth seemed final and other teachings in the comparison trivial and superficial.

Nevertheless it had its opponents. Some carried the system to pure idealism, Wang Show-yen, of the latter part of the fifteenth century, is the best representative of this tendency. He took a phrase of Mencius, "intuitive knowledge," as formative and rejected "the distinction of things." He declared that the rose ceased to exist when our perception of it ceased, and would turn attention from things and books to the heart, putting meditation for study. He denied the distinction between *Khi* and *Li*, for without the heart is no *Li*, and *Li* and heart are identical. Since all possess this intuitive knowledge, our one duty is to polish our hearts by obedience to the five virtues and relations. Ethics constitute the only science, and this we know as we act. If we say we know, we already act, or we do not truly know. This innate knowledge is in all things, grasses, stones, trees, heaven, earth, as well as in man, and by it each thing is itself and all partake of the same law. This philosopher had been a Buddhist in his youth, and his writings show marks of the strong influence of Buddhism; but he insisted that his purpose was different, not self-absorption in mystical contemplation, but the attainment of the practical virtues belonging to the world. Here

again we find the pure Confucian influence and conformity to type.

The orthodox reply is as follows: Wang was a strong man of excellent purpose. In his days scholars were busy with words and phrases and neglected self-examination. So he supposed that the study of things leads astray, and that he should examine himself with his intuitions. But our philosophy does not neglect these intuitions, though it shows their embodiment in things. Even Wang studied the sacred books, and they are "things." Apart from things, what material have we at all for study, of reverence apart from the ceremonies, of soothing peace apart from music, of ethics apart from the scriptures? Why did the sages teach their long and difficult way, if there be so short a cut through our intuitions? Besides, what employment is there for our intuitions apart from contact with things? As if one should say, the knowledge of music is by our ears, let us then mind our ears and learn the five sounds without hearing them, or the five colors without seeing, or the five flavors without eating! Is it not plain that though the knowledge is in ourselves, yet sounds, colors, and flavors are in things, and that we know as we see, hear, and eat? Precisely so in the higher sphere, even the rustic has a heart which reverences and loves, yet are his love and reverence taught and broadened by study of the scriptures, and truly known only as embodied in the actual relationships. Mencius's expression, "to know without learning is intuitive knowledge," teaches that there is a heart in man which loves and reverences before he studies. Make that the foundation, study, and it shall be strengthened. He did not teach that we can be perfect without study. This attempt to correct philosophy by casting away distinctions is so to straighten the crooked that it bends backward.

Another school rejected the distinction between Khi and Li, and charged Chu Hi with substituting Buddhism and Taoism for the truth. They declared that Li in its ontological sense is not found in the sacred books, but more, that it directly contradicts them. They quote Chu Hi's words, "With great doubt is great progress, with little doubt is little progress, with no doubt is no

progress," as authority for doubting him. He teaches that behind the "Great Ultimate" is the "No Ultimate," and thus that non-being is the source of being. He makes Khi and Li to be two and distinct. As a result Yin and Yang are not of the Way (the Li), but belong to the lower category of form. So man's true nature must be distinguished from his embodied nature and the heart is to be purified by isolation, contemplation, and unity with the Li of heaven. He says: "The clear empty divinity is the reality of the heart," and "The Li of heaven is unopposed, empty, broad," with many more phrases like these. All this, including the words from Buddhism and Taoism, is directly and wholly opposed to the teaching of Confucius. The six classics are the source of truth, and among them the book of Changes is pre-eminent. If we doubt it, what can we believe? It says: "Yin and Yang are the Way, the rest and motion of the one Khi. Rest is Yin, motion is Yang, the endless revolution is thus named." Here is no mention of Li, but the Way is identified with Khi. We may not add Li on the supposition that it was omitted by the sage.<sup>6</sup>

Li is merely the principle of the Khi, and the two are one. We cannot say: "Li neither begins nor ends, but in Khi are life and death," for the two are just one. Coldness is water's nature, and heat fire's: when fire and water disappear heat and coolness go also; the nature is destroyed. Water is pure by nature, but its purity is not distinct from itself. So with man's nature, we should not separate into two in order to clear up the supposed difficulty in the teaching of Mencius. The distinction is not between the real and the embodied natures, but between ordinary and exceptional. Coolness is the nature of water, a truth not invalidated by the discovery of hot springs; and so man's nature is good as the ordinary fact, a truth not disproved by the discovery of ras-cals here and there.

Further, the talk about the "No Ultimate" beyond the "Great Ultimate" is simply Taoism. Laotze said, "All things come

<sup>6</sup>The appendices to the Book of Changes are ascribed to Confucius. He wrote none of them. They represent quite a different type of thought with a cosmological element wholly wanting in his words.

from being, being comes from non-being." But the sages teach that being is the source of all. Truth separates from heresy at this point. Chu Hi thoroughly studied Buddhism in his youth, and was never free from its influence. He was, moreover, a partisan, and did not consider questions impartially, to the misleading of other men.

Mencius compared the "Way" to the great highway, and grieved that men do not walk therein. Even the fool may know it readily. But these philosophers have made it difficult, too high, too distant, hard to be understood and obeyed. With Confucius and Mencius obedience, reverence, loyalty, and truth were first, and learning secondary. But the philosophers, with their "No Ultimate" and "Great Ultimate," put progress in learning as the chief thing, with contemplation as the means for purification and the foundation of right conduct. This is what is meant by too high, too distant, too difficult, this putting discussion before virtue. This is to be so profound, so minute in analysis, as to miss the main meaning. In this philosophy differs from the teaching of the sages.

A few writers went even further, and in their effort to get back to Confucius rejected Mencius and the grandson of Confucius, as if one were to reject St. Paul and St. John in getting back to Christ. They argued: Mencius was hotly engaged with adversaries, and did not notice his divergence from Confucius. He taught that man's nature is good only for his immediate didactic purpose. The philosophers of the Sung dynasty thought him in agreement with Confucius, and put his works alongside of the *Analects*! Confucius did not use terms like "heart," "nature," "Khi" and "Li." These were introduced by his grandson, fostered by Mencius, and brought to full luxuriance by the philosophers whose teachings in all essential points were identical with Taoism and Buddhism. The words of Confucius are the only standard of doctrine. Even his grandson and Mencius are to be rejected, and still more later teachers, and most of all the philosophers of the Sung dynasty. But only those who study Confucius independently are prepared to reject the others,



and only by casting them aside will Confucius shine forth as the sun when clouds are dispersed.<sup>7</sup>

The orthodox made reply: Confucius truly did not use these precise terms, yet did he imply all that Chu Hi taught. The philosophers were busy with the discussion of great principles, and were not careful to confine themselves to the terminology of the scriptures. For us on this account to charge them with error is to reveal our own superficiality.

For consider the distinction between Khi and Li, using well-known illustrations. Reckoning up the wheel, there is no wheel, reckoning up the year, there is no year. Let us see—this is the spoke, this the rim, this the axle, this the hub, but the spoke is not the wheel, nor the rim, nor the axle, nor the hub. Yet if we cast these away, away goes the wheel also. The law of the wheel preceded it and, before the wheel was made, was determined, and because it is imperishable the carpenter follows it and makes the wheel. Whence, then, is the wheel, from its parts, or are these from it? If we say the former, we know indeed the form but not the Li. So with the year—twelve hours make a day, thirty days make a month, twelve months make a year, but the year is not in hour or day or month; but still, casting these aside there is no year. The Li is determined first, sun and moon revolve according to this plan, and calendars are made for a hundred years to come as for the centuries past. For the Li is not in day, or month, or year, but is forever. As Confucius said, "Heaven speaks not, yet the four seasons labor and all things are produced." So with everything, water and fire are Khi, their flowing and burning are also Khi, but that water being water shall flow and not burn, and that fire being fire shall burn and not flow, is their decreed, unchangeable nature. It is their Li.

Flower and leaf, unfolding and bloom, bitter and sweet, all are Khi, but that bitter shall be bitter, and sweet shall be sweet, that the leaf shall unfold and the flower bloom, is decided unchangeably before all, and so sweet is never bitter, nor bitter sweet. The heart and its feelings are altogether Khi, but that

<sup>7</sup> The criticism is correct in the main, as Confucius cared nothing for, and probably knew nothing of, ontology. In the doctrine of the Mean and Mencius cosmology appears, but it is still secondary.

joy goes with good and grief with evil is determined before birth for wise man and fool, and this determination is the Li. With different things Li has different names, yet is it ever one, decreed, unchanging, and the same.

Were it not so, were the Way of the Khi, then with the changes of the Khi, the Way itself would change, and neither the virtues nor the Way of the ancients be ours. At last we should be like the brutes. Fearing this, the sages set the Way on high with the Li first, and thus unchangeable amid all the permutations of the Khi. If we know not Li, study is all in vain and leads to heresy, to the worship of the Buddhas and to prayers.

When modern learning came to Japan, followers of Chu Hi were among its most strenuous antagonists. Possibly our geographical position seemed indicative of evil, for Yin is the West, dark, passive, avaricious, and the way of all evil men belongs to it. For, however that may be, foreigners claim to know the laws of nature, and use Mencius's own term, natural philosophy, to describe their science. They are rebels who exhibit a forged seal of state and raise a rabble. True disciples of the sage should expose the counterfeit and destroy the false scholars. For every one knows that the teaching of the sages is of the Way, and not of wonders, but the foreigners study only the outward appearances. Their analysis is minute, but they are like half-trained men who know the forms of the ideographs but not their meaning, not a word can they understand. Indeed, such analysis destroys the possibility of knowledge, as if one should seek to know the wind by the analysis of a fan, or the meaning of a written word by the analysis of a pen. Microscope and analysis increase the minuteness of such studies, but disclose no Li. Hence it is that the barbarian learning of a hundred things stops with the hundred things, and of a thousand things stops with the thousand things and, however great, understands not one.

Consider their astronomy! They discuss and measure, their work is long drawn out, and deceives men by its minuteness. But they take heaven for a dead thing, and fall into scorn and lust. Thinking that heaven is heaven, and that man is man, believing neither wisdom nor the Way, their selfish, false wisdom

makes them brutish. In pity the sages set forth the truth, and Mencius said, "Knowing nature, we know heaven." Therefore, would we know heaven we must know ourselves. As the heart conforms to Li, as action is in moderation, as there is joy in righteousness and shame in sin, as we know the smallest right or wrong within ourselves, sage and dunce, emperor and peasant, do not differ in the least. This is heaven's nature, and this is man's. What man's nature hates, heaven hates, and what man's nature loves, heaven loves. That which is hated brings grief, and that which is loved brings blessing. Heaven seems far away and strange, in truth it is the living Li which errs not, nor can be deceived. It can be worshiped only by perfecting our hearts in obedience, loyalty and truth, by the faithful government of empire and province. Cast away evil, cherish the good, turn from folly to wisdom ; thus only can heaven be served.

Astronomy has its uses, in making calendars, but, as the study of heaven, it should be studied reverently and only so far as necessity demands. The barbarians know nothing of this, but think sun, moon, heaven, earth, man, and things all separate and distinct. Ignorant and irreverent, they follow the custom of their land, study all the details, measure distances, observe the stars, making astronomy a toy. Ignorant of their parent's heart, they handle and criticise his body. Such study is only of the form, is valueless and worse, for thus they come to scorn heaven. Such sin must be severely reprovèd.

When Japan finally turned to the West and native scholars were free to express themselves, it appeared that few really held the orthodox philosophy. Criticism had done its work. The realism which made Li an existence in itself was the chief intellectual difficulty. And yet no system took the vacant place and with the advent of the new learning the old vanished away. Few of the younger men know its principles or its authors. And I am told that the situation in China resembles that in Japan fifty years ago, that is, that while the orthodox system nominally holds its own, criticism has shaken it so that it is accepted in its completeness by but few.

I conclude with two brief pieces paraphrased from the writings of a Japanese follower of Chu Hi. They were written in the first part of the eighteenth century and express the religious and ethical sides of the system freed from formal exposition and from controversy. The first shows the divinity of the immanent forces of the universe and the second the consciousness of a man who can identify self and Li, self and the appointed duty of his station.

#### THE VIRTUE OF THE DIVINITIES.

The doctrine of the Mean speaks of the "virtue of the divinities." Chu Hi explains this to mean the heart and its revelation, and the oldest commentary says, "the divinity is pure intelligence and virtue." Now all know that God is just, but most do not know his intelligence. But elsewhere is no such intelligence, for man sees and hears by eye and ear, and where these organs are not he does not know. And with his heart does man think, and sight, hearing and thought all take time, however swift of perception one may be. But God uses neither eye nor ear, nor does he pass over in thought. Directly does he feel and immediately respond. Thus in heaven and earth is a being separated from no time or place, communicating instantaneously, embodied in all things, filling the universe. Without form or voice it is neither seen nor heard of men. When there is truth it feels, and when it feels it responds. Responding at once, it is ; responding not, it naturally is not. This is the divinity of heaven and earth, as the doctrine of the Mean says, "Looked for it cannot be seen, listened to it cannot be heard! It enters into all things! There is nothing without it!" Like the priest worshipping before the shrine,

"Not knowing what it is, grateful tears he weeps."

Are not his tears the perception of truth? Before the shrine he stands, single hearted, direct, with truth, and to this truth God comes and they commune, and so it is he weeps.

As the reflection in clear water answers to the moon and together pool and moon increase the light, so if continually in the same truth they are dissolved, we cannot distinguish God and man even as sky and water, water and sky unite in one. "Everywhere, everywhere, on the right hand he seems and on the left." This is the revealing of God, the truth not to be concealed. Think not that he is distant, but seek him in the heart, for it is the house of God. When there is no obstacle of lust, being of one spirit with the God of heaven and earth, there is this communion, and without communion is no such thing. The priest did not weep before he visited the shrine, and by this we know that God came.

And now for the application. Examine yourselves, make the truth of the heart the foundation, increase in learning, and at last you shall attain. Then shall you know the truth of which I speak.

THE MORNING GLORY'S HOUR.

"The morning glory of an hour  
Enviest not the pine of a thousand years."

What profundity! Many have sung of the morning glory, of its short life, of autumn loneliness and the vanity of the world.

"After a thousand years the pine decays,  
The flower has its glory in blooming for a day."

That is pretty, but it merely makes bloom and decay one. The ignorant think it profound, but it is superficial like Buddhism. The first verse has other meaning. It teaches the truth of Confucius, "He who in the morning hears the Way may die content at night." To blossom early, wait for the rising sun, and die, such is the morning glory's nature received from heaven. It does not forget its nature and envy the pine its thousand years; so every morning it blooms and then it dies. Thus it fulfils its destiny. How can we despise the truth the flower reveals? The pine differs from this not at all, but we learn it best from the short-lived flower. The pine's heart is not of the thousand years nor the morning glory's of the hour, but only that they may fulfil their destiny.

The glory of the thousand years, the evanescence of the single hour, are not in pine or flower but in our thought. So is it with unfeeling things, but man has feeling and is head of all. Yet is he deceived by things and does not attain to this unless he know the Way. But this knowing is not the mystic contemplation of which Buddhism speaks, for the Way is adjusted to all, so that miserable men and women may know and do it. But only as we know it can we truly do it, otherwise even with practice we do not know and even in doing is no profit. Though we are in the Way until death we do not understand. Truly to know and act is to be like the fish in water and the bird in air.

Reason should be our life, never should we separate from it. While we live we obey, and Way and body together come to death. Long shall we be at peace. To live a day is to obey a day and then to die; to live a year is to obey a year and then to die. If thus in the morning we hear and die at night, there is no regret. So the morning glory lives its hour, blooms wholly as it has received, and without resentment dies. How greatly differ the thousand years of the pine in length, yet both equally fulfil their destiny and both are equally content. This is the meaning of the poet in his verse:

"The morning glory of an hour  
Enviest not the pine of a thousand years."

I add as a parallel Ben Jonson's verse :

THE NOBLE NATURE.

It is not growing like a tree  
In bulk, doth make man better be,  
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,  
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sear.

A lily of a day  
Is fairer far in May.  
Although it fall and die that night,  
It was the plant and flower of light ;  
In small proportions we just beauties see  
And in short measures life may perfect be.